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PRM 308- 1241

### Week 3 Report

#### Job Duties: June 20<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>

Wednesday 21st (5 hours): Today was a record heat day and so I spent my volunteering hours watching more videos from the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy. They have a full page of YouTube videos, and in the first week I watched a lot of the geology and ecology videos but there were more that I had saved for a day like today. The videos I watched today went over the history of the humans that once lived there, fauna, first aid management, and ethnobotany. Each subject has multiple videos talking about a certain subtopic and they were all interesting to be able to learn about how different plants, animals, and humans have been able to survive the harsher desert climates. It is also very important to watch a video on first aid management because there are many plants and animals out there that can cause harm and you have to know how to deal with it. I also spent some good time working on memorizing the rules of the park because I have read it many times but there is a lot to remember to keep people and the park safe and going along the lines of the mission statement.

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> (9 Hours): The valley has been cooling down a little bit and isn't in the 120s during the days and means that I can go out in the mornings again when it's in the mid 70s and slowly climbs to the hundreds through the morning hours to the afternoon. It's nice to be able to be roaming the trails again and seeing the friendly faces along the way while I decided to do the Verrado Temporary trail system again to stay familiar with it because it is the hardest system of trails to memorize and know where you are because it is only marked by stone piles and people are creating more and more trails as they go. These trails are hard to keep up with as well because I have to pick up cactus debris and keep them off the trail to protect people. As you are watching the trails you are seeing teddy bear cholla all over the trail with every step. This cactus is also known as the jumping cactus and what looks like cactus balls will break from the main body as a way to protect the plant. This means that anything that bumps it will make them fall into the trails and we have to make sure they are out of the way to keep the trails safe. It is nice to be able to see the people who come on these trails as well because they live in a cool little community that created their own trail system to cope with their daily lives and get away with some of their favorite leisure times. When I ended my hike, I came up on some very hardcore hikers who had full on camping packs and sleeping pads. I am not sure if they were camping in the mountains somewhere or just preparing for the worst because of the heat which isn't uncommon to do because a 2-hour hike in the phoenix heat can be life or death. After I was done I worked on journaling and marketing for the Conservancy.

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> (11 Hours): Today I returned to the Verrado Temporary system because I wanted to find some of the trails I have seen but haven't been on yet. These trails are hard because I see them when I am done and out of gas from other days hiking and don't know how far they run and shouldn't push myself to explore them. I ran into one mountain biker but other than

that these trails were all to me and I didn't see anyone else after him. I did run into a rather large jack rabbit that scared me because I was coming down a rocky hill. I slipped on the hill because of some loose rocks and didn't fall but was vulnerable and then this large jack rabbit shoots out of a den and I am not sure what it was at first and it was only a few feet in front of me. I am glad it was just a rabbit and nothing that could have attacked me. It is fun to see this wildlife in on these trails though because you don't see them as much in the other parks because there are so many hikers walking through the park. These new trails were a lot of fun though and I was able to explore more of the area that I thought I had already mainly discovered. At the end of my hike when I came back to the trail head I was greeted by golfers because their cart path goes through the trailhead. They were very friendly and it was nice to interact with people after exploring on my own for many hours. When I got home I worked on typing my report and getting pictures ready for Facebook. I also journaled for the Conservancy and I am excited to bring my first newsletter article together for next week. I still have to talk to Alice who is in charge of when she wants me to turn it in but I am excited to have my first every article published somewhere. I also will be working hiking more trails for steward badge and have to contact the guy who runs maintenance to see how they upkeep the park making it look nice. I also want to contact my supervisor to see if there is anything I can do for behind the scenes looks at how they run the business sides of the Conservancy.

#### What I learned:

I have learned that when you are out stewarding the trails you are not only looking out for the trails and making sure that they are looking nice and safe but you are also trying to help the people and keep them safe. Many people look at rules as being downers and that they should just let people be people but the rules in the park are there for the safety of the environment and for the safety of the people.

I am learning that a lot of the course works that I did for my major are starting to click in my brain and that I am thinking of things from what I learned in classes at NAU.

I am learning that I want to be out in these parks and be able to help the environment and the wildlife in it but I am also liking the aspect of helping people and giving them the knowledge that I have to help them better understand the outdoors and the things around them.

I am learning that my customer service skills from working different jobs to get through school can still be applied when I am out in the field especially when I want to work in certain parks where people like to visit.

Hours Worked This Week: 25

Hours Worked Total: 90